

thank them for their service to this Nation. May God bless them and may God bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Mr. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONFUSING DAY FOR REPUBLICANS AND CONSERVATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRUCCI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, first let me, too, congratulate, as a fellow Midwesterner, the city of Detroit. We had many escaping slaves go through the Underground Railroad through Detroit. We provide many auto parts. Unfortunately, our beloved Pistons used to be the Fort Wayne Pistons, and they, too, moved to Detroit; and I wish they would win as many games in Detroit as they used to win in Fort Wayne.

But today has been a confusing day for Republicans and conservatives. We had a handout during the amendment of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) to eliminate the national testing that came from the Republicans.

It said that, if one voted to eliminate national testing, one would wipe out the President's cornerstone of accountability. Without assessment, schools cannot be held accountable for improving student achievement. Without annual assessment information, parents are powerless to choose a better-performing school. For over 35 years, there has been little or no academic accountability in K-12 education programs. We need more accountability for Federal tax dollars, not less.

This is really confusing. It is a Republican handout.

Now, let us apply this to economics. Without the cornerstone of accountability, without assessments, business cannot be held accountable for improving business achievement. Without annual assessment information, workers are powerless to choose a better-performing business. For over 35 years, there has been little or no business accountability in ergonomics programs. We need more accountability for Federal tax dollars, not less.

Now, let us try health insurance. Without assessments, businesses cannot be held accountable for improving health insurance. Without annual assessment information, workers are powerless to choose a better-performing business. For over 35 years, there has been little or no business accountability in health insurance programs. We need more accountability for Federal tax dollars, not less.

This is a disturbing trend. Since when did the Republican Party stand for national accountability when we have always argued for local responsibility and accountability. It is not a question of accountability, it is accountability to whom. That is really what we have been arguing over today.

I am curious what is happening to our party. A few minutes ago, a group of conservative Republicans had been hauled down to the White House for a combination of persuasion and subtle threats. I hope that the people in this body can still vote their conscience, and we have not handed over our voting cards to the deals developed with Senator KENNEDY in the Senate, with veto power for the House Democrats.

My friend from South Carolina is under heavy pressure not to even offer his minimal State flexibility for a mere seven States because it might upset the Democrats. This scaled down Straight A's was accepted by Senator KENNEDY. Apparently, we must stay to his left, and then what is to guarantee that we can even hold that in conference. It used to be that the House was the conservative body. Now, apparently, it is Senator KENNEDY who is the conservative.

President Bush is a great President. I agree with him on almost everything, and I am so enthusiastic about his leadership. But on this issue, he has chosen to go with Democrats and a liberal bill. About every major conservative organization in America, including Dr. Dobson, Rush Limbaugh, the home schoolers, the Family Research Council, over 40, I think now, 50 conservative organizations oppose this bill.

Maybe there is only going to be 5 or 10 or even 20 Members with the courage to vote no in the end. The pressures are great on us. Forty-nine Republicans today stood up to the President on national testing. Last year, we probably had over 220. Interestingly, this year, the Democrats kind of switched sides, because previously the Democrats had been for national testing. That is partly why people are distrustful of politicians, because it appears that one does not take a ideological position and stick with it, it is more a party position. It is a very upsetting trend in America.

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Part of my concern is that there will not always be a President Bush. We do not know who is going to be the next president. And when we pass things that mandate national testing, we are taking a risk that the next president will not be George W. Bush and, instead, we may have someone who is going to ram this stuff down our throat, and we may regret and rue the day that we passed a bill with less flexibility, more money, more bureaucracy, and now national testing.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRUCCI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, this is a continuing discussion of the so-called national energy policy of the Bush administration. Buried way back in the back of this report, under appendix one, under summary of recommendations, on an unnumbered page, is a recommendation that the Federal Government and, of course, the States' rights party, my Republican friends, should mandate that every State in America adopt energy deregulation.

Now, if it was working somewhere, that might be a good idea, but we have all seen the extraordinary disaster in California. The disaster in California is spreading across the western United States. It is extracting billions, billions of dollars from residential ratepayers, small businesses and large businesses, and upstreaming that money to a few special companies. It happens that three or four of them are based in Houston, Texas, in particular, one really outstanding corporate citizen named Reliant Energy.

Now, Reliant saw its profits go from \$27 million last year to over \$500 million in 1 year. What great new thing did they invent or provide? Nothing. What they managed to do was buy cheap a couple of energy plants in California and begin the most sophisticated gaming of the energy market as reported in Sunday's San Francisco Chronicle, and all of us in the west are paying. In fact, in the Pacific Northwest, we are paying higher average wholesale prices than are the people of California.

This manipulation is spreading across the entire western United States, and now the Bush administration thinks this is such a great thing, we should spread it across the entire United States with a new mandate that every State adopt this. Now, my colleagues may say, ah, well, the California system is flawed. Well, I tell my colleagues, take out the flaws of the California system and go to Montana. You will find that all the large manufacturers in Montana are closing down because Pennsylvania Power & Light bought their generation, gaming them, and they cannot afford the power any more.

Or let us go to New England. In New England, PGE of California, that says they are broke in California, sent the money to the parent company. The parent company created a new company, which is PGE of New England. And PGE of New England is manipulating the market there and has raised the prices substantially.

This is the great new thing the Bush administration wants to bring to all of America: more profits, rolling blackouts, price gouging, and a mandate from the Republican administration that every State be subject to this sort of case.